

VZCZCXYZ0012  
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHAM #0676/01 0441406  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 131406Z FEB 07  
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7045  
INFO RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI IMMEDIATE 1039  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE 2919  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH IMMEDIATE 1727  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE 0417  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE 4305

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 000676

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY  
ALSO FOR NEA AND PRM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/13/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [IR](#) [JO](#)  
SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO JORDAN

REF: A. AMMAN 445  
[B](#). AMMAN 551  
[C](#). AMMAN 251  
[D](#). AMMAN 611

Classified By: Ambassador David Hale for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#). (C) King Abdullah and Embassy Amman look forward to your return to Jordan. He welcomes your personal engagement on Israeli-Palestinian issues. He is also looking forward to his upcoming visit to the U.S., which will include an address to a joint session of Congress March 7.

[2](#). (C) Since your visit January 14, apprehension over the future of Iraq has intensified. Many Jordanians, taking their cues from Arab and international media, take failure of the U.S. effort there as a foregone conclusion. Media and government attention is turning to Iraqis currently in Jordan, and to speculation that events in Iraq might soon send more this way. Iran's role in Iraq has brought more ordinary Jordanians around to the King's long-held view of Tehran as the principal threat to Jordan and the region. Senior Jordanian officials are disturbed by evidence of an incipient Saudi-Iranian strategic arrangement, seen in such developments as the Mecca Agreement. The Saudis are not consulting the Jordanians on their contacts with Tehran, but the King is eager to preserve the effectiveness of the Arab Quartet.

[3](#). (C) The controversy over construction work adjacent to the Temple Mount has resonated here both on "the street," and at senior levels of the GOJ. The Jordanian officials responsible for Jordan's treaty role in administration of Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem believe Israeli authorities have been dealing in bad faith on the ramp and other issues related to the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif. King Abdullah is probably embarrassed over Jordan's inability to influence the Israelis on this sensitive issue, but has positioned himself to appear publicly as both responsible - by calling for calm - and responsive to Muslim sentiment.

[4](#). (C) Senior Jordanian officials are concerned that the announcement of a Palestinian national unity government will complicate the efforts of the U.S. and Arab moderates to contain Hamas (and standing behind it, Syria and Iran.) You will find him open to proposals for cooperation on regaining the initiative for moderates.

[5](#). (C) Issues at the top of the bilateral agenda include our recent demarches on Iraqi migrants, GOJ hopes for supplemental assistance, the need for a new anti-money

laundering law, and elections:

--On Iraqis, the King may be unwilling to raise with you a topic he views as potentially divisive. Jordanians worry new Iraqi refugee flows could destabilize the country (ref A), as Palestinian refugees did in the run-up to the 1970 civil war.

He and his advisors are framing a reply to our recent demarches, and they will likely be concerned by our calls for Jordan to continue admitting more Iraqis and to grant more secure legal status to those here illegally.

--GOJ officials have requested several hundred million dollars in supplemental FY 07 military and economic aid (ref B.) Military aid is the King's priority, because he views Syria as an increasingly serious threat. Prince Feisal recently marketed the supplemental request directly on the Hill.

--An anti-money laundering bill currently before parliament is necessary for Jordan to meet international standards for combating terrorist financing. The Embassy has lobbied the government heavily (but not publicly) to make the bill a priority for passage in the current session of parliament.

-- All of the King's leading advisors are urging him to dismiss Prime Minister Bakheet. Although Bakheet is himself a product of the military and the Royal Court, many in the Palace and the security service criticize Bakheet's mixed record in pushing through Parliament bills the King has identified as priorities, and perceived failure to prepare a socioeconomic context for 2007 elections that will help moderates. Some also view him as soft on Islamists and a lukewarm supporter of the King's foreign policy. The King may decide to change governments when Parliament recesses in the spring.

-- Jordan will hold municipal elections in mid-2007, and elect a new parliament in the Fall (ref C). Establishment politicians and Islamists are both gearing up for what are likely to be tough contests. The King has privately decided to hold the parliamentary polls under the same electoral law that in 2003 produced the current parliament; democracy activists had hoped for a reformed electoral law, while the security establishment had been urging the King to postpone the elections out of fear Islamists would poll strongly on popular unhappiness with economic liberalization and Jordanian foreign policy (ref d). He has chosen a middle course.

-- The Millennium Challenge Corporation is negotiating a Compact Agreement with the GOJ, and is about to provide assistance in municipal governance under last year's Threshold Agreement, once the upper house of parliament completes passage a new Municipality law, as expected. MCC is particularly focused on further opening up Jordan's political system and media.

Visit Amman's Classified Web Site at  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/amman/>

HALE